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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (6/25): "NO HOPE FOR PALESTINE
WITHOUT INTERNAL UNITY"

Main Stories:

The three dailies lead with French President Sarkozy's visit to Bethlehem and meeting with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas on June 24. After signing an agreement worth \$21 million to build an industrial zone in Bethlehem, Sarkozy commented that, "the tyranny suffered by the Jews ...should not be remedied by punishing the Palestinian people." He emphasized that Israel's security cannot be achieved by the separation barrier or by settlement activities, but rather through the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state, which he considers a "priority" for France. In Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, the French President promised strong support for a "true" peace process in terms of economic, political, diplomatic and even military support. Abbas welcomed Sarkozy as a, "close friend to the Palestinian people," and praised the French President's view of how to solve the conflict.

The June 24 Berlin donor conference is also front page news. Donors pledged \$242 million in support to the Palestinian police and Palestinian judicial institutions. The three dailies report that donors expressed support for the two-state solution and that Palestinian Premier Fayyad stressed the need to achieve progress on political and security tracks. Fayyad underscored that halting Israeli settlement activity is a central topic in peace talks. In related coverage, PLO negotiator Erekat reveals in an exclusive interview with Al Ayyam that Secretary Rice has invited the Palestinian negotiating team to Washington in July, to discuss issues related to a final peace agreement.

The June 24 meeting between Israeli Premier Olmert and Egyptian President Mubarak focuses headlines on Hamas/Israel prisoner exchange talks. Al- Ayyam reports that the leaders agreed to

intensify exchange negotiations involving the release by Hamas of Israeli soldier Shalit. The leaders also discussed reopening the Rafah crossing point according to the 2005 protocol whereby the Palestinian Authority and Egypt share responsibility for the management of the crossing under EU supervision. In separate reporting, Mubarak stated that it is, "illogical" to link talks about the Hamas/Israeli truce in the Gaza Strip with the issue of freeing Israeli soldier Shalit. Al-Quds notes comments by an Israeli official confirming a promise by Egypt not to reopen the Rafah crossing point until Shalit is released.

All dailies express outrage over the, "assassination" of a university student and a leader of Islamic Jihad's military wing, Al-Quds Brigades, in the West Bank city of Nablus by Israeli soldiers on June 24. Widespread condemnation of the act and calls by Islamic Jihad and Hamas for a "response" are reported in the dailies. Papers note that Islamic Jihad launched a rocket attack on June 24 on the southern Israeli city of Sderot in retaliation.

The dailies highlight a brief announcement that Israeli authorities have issued orders to suspend the demolition of 450 houses in the Mount of Olives neighborhood in East Jerusalem.

Al- Quds runs an inside report about the June 24 reception held at the American Center in Jerusalem in honor of Palestinian and Israeli prize winners of the Institute of International Education's Goldberg Prize for Peace. The award went to members of the Parents Circle Family Forum, a group of Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost family members to the conflict and now advocate reconciliation. The paper notes that Deputy Principal Officer Thomas Duffy from the

JERUSALEM 00001085 002 OF 002

U.S. Consulate-Jerusalem and Deputy Chief of Mission Luis G. Moreno of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv delivered remarks.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1. Al- Quds prints its daily editorial entitled, "In order to regain Arab and world support" (6/25): Palestinian, Arab and international factors have led to a decrease in interest in the Palestinian cause compared to the support witnessed in the sixties and seventies... Internal Palestinian division, especially between Fatah and Hamas, is the latest factor... [the result is] a continuous decrease in Palestinian demands and continuous increase in Israeli greed... the greatest powers in the world have not put any real pressure on Israel to limit settlement activity and remove... checkpoints and obstacles....the greatest blame should be assigned to us as Palestinians, because we have closed our eyes to the danger of settlement activity and busied ourselves with marginal clashes over artificial positions and authority at a time when Israel has all the political, economic and security clout. Palestinians will not regain international support for their just cause unless they abandon these marginal conflicts and show proof of national unity and dedication to Palestine...

2. Al-Quds carries an op-ed by Awni Sadeq entitled, " No... solutions through division" (6/25): ...[if we] look at the Palestinian situation... we do not see anything to inspire Israel to be serious or respond to any of the two Palestinian factions demands. [Negotiations] are only a game for the Israelis... they see some benefit to them ... internal Palestinian division cannot project any power that would force the [Israelis] to take negotiations seriously, but rather, it shows a weakness [that can be exploited]... There can be no... solutions while division remains."

Duffy